Friends of Bigelow Library Annual Report

June, 2025

Dear Friends and Library Supporters,

As I wrap up my term as President of the Friends of the Library, I want to take a moment to reflect on our shared accomplishments and express my gratitude.

Serving in this role has been an honor, and I am thankful for the dedication of my fellow board members and our volunteers; the generosity of our members, sponsors, and donors; and the partnership of our library staff. Your energy, ideas, and commitment have been key to everything we've achieved together.

Over the past couple of years, we have accomplished a great deal as a team. Rebuilding the board, hosting successful book sales and community events, and raising funds for library programs have truly made a difference to the library and the community. This June, we are pleased to donate $5000 to The Bigelow Free Public Library Capital Improvement Fund. With the funds raised, the library can continue to serve the town effectively by providing modern resources and services.

On a personal note, serving as President has been a meaningful experience. The library has always been a special place for me—a place of curiosity, discovery, and belonging. Working alongside all of you to support it has been a pleasure.

I am happy to announce that Dan Freedman, current Officer-At-Large, is our new President. We are looking forward to another successful year under his leadership.

I encourage you to stay engaged, continue supporting the Friends, and share the library's story with others. Together, we can ensure the library remains a vital hub for generations to come.

With sincere thanks, on behalf of the Friends Board,
Phyllis Staffier, Outgoing President

Rebecca Griffith-Silverman, Treasurer
Polly Fuhrmeister, Secretary
Dan Freedman, Officer-At-Large/Incoming President
Angela Silvester, Officer-At-Large
Christina Gagliardi, Incoming Officer-At-Large
Astrid Hernandez, Student Officer

The Year in Review

The Friends has had another meaningful and productive year. Alongside our regular fundraising efforts and much-loved events, we launched some new initiatives that reflect our growing commitment to enriching the library and its community. Highlights from this year include:

- Welcoming our first-ever student board member
- Introducing Friends-led programs at the library
- Enhancing the library grounds with native plant gardens
- Contributing to the library's capital improvement campaign

These efforts underscore our mission to champion the library as a vibrant center of learning, connection, and growth.

Community Outreach / Engagement

The Friends consider community engagement to be our most important role. These compelling numbers show our success:

- **18** volunteers made the book sale, mini golf, gardening, and other programs happen
- **10** businesses sponsored mini golf or made in-kind donations
- **1** grant from the Clinton Cultural Council helped fund the mini golf event
- **58** new library patrons received info about the Friends
- **150** participants enjoyed the mini golf event
- **306** people browsed and bought books at the book sale

Membership & Donations

Membership plays a vital role in the success of the Friends organization and remains one of our primary sources of funding. We sincerely thank all the new and renewing members who supported us this past year, and we invite others to join us in championing our library.

This year, the Friends were honored to receive many donations in memory of Maureen Friedrich, a Clinton educator and long-time Trustee for the library. The generosity of so many donors and members highlights the level of support Bigelow Library receives from the community it serves.

Current membership: 67 members

- 10 new
- 25 renewing
- 32 need to renew

$2300 in major donations

- Gifts in memory of Mauren Friedrich
- $500 from a generous library supporter

Executive Board

The board welcomed our first Student Officer, Astrid Hernandez, a junior at Clinton High School. Astrid and future Student Officers provide a younger person's perspective and ideas on how the Friends and the library can best serve the needs and interests of the town's youth.

Our board President is leaving the board after her 2-year term. Dan Freedman, currently an Officer At-Large, is stepping into the leadership role. Christina Gagliardi is joining the board to complete Dan's term as Officer At-Large. We are pleased to have such a smooth transition of leadership and to have all current board positions filled.

We always welcome the public to attend our monthly meetings, which take place on the first Saturday of the month, at 10 AM, in the library community room. This is a great way to be involved in supporting the library and to see how the board operates.

Events & Programs

The Friends offered our much-anticipated, annual events again this year: **Olde Home Day Book Sale** and **Library Mini Golf**. Both events drew good crowds and raised funds to support the library. We also revived the **Everyday Book Sale** in the lower level of the library, where a variety of adult, young adult, and middle grades books are on sale year-round. You can get a great read for a very low price and support the library at the same time!

In the early fall, our **Garden Committee** focused on revitalizing two garden beds on the library grounds: the sign bed and the Church Street bed. We cleared the beds and planted **native plants**, which provide food and shelter for butterflies, insects and birds. This spring, we added more native plants to both beds as well as a beach plum tree on the Church Street side. The effect is a cleaner, colorful, low maintenance, and eco-friendly landscape. Stop by the library and watch the gardens grow as the growing season progresses.

In addition to the library programs sponsored by the Friends, two programs were run by Friends members. Dan Freedman (incoming President) started a monthly **Adult Board Game Night**, which got off to a good start in April. This spring, Lisa Grasso (Garden Committee member) delivered a 2-part presentation on **Native Plants & Habitat Support**. We hope to continue involving Friends members in providing activities and talks in the future. Let us know if you have a skill or interest you'd like to share.

Here is a list of library programs organized or funded by the Friends throughout the year:

- Summer Reading Program 2024 **FUNDED**
- Annual Olde Home Days book sale
- Revitalizing library garden beds with native plants
- Cookies & Cocoa Holiday Event
- Library Mini Golf
- Adult Board Game Nights
- Native Plants & Habitat Support talks
- Musician Scott Oullette **FUNDED**
- Flower Arranging **FUNDED**
- Family Bonfire Firepit **FUNDED**
- Fancy Jars Craft **FUNDED**
- Food for the Legislative Breakfast **FUNDED**
- $5000 donation to The Bigelow Free Public Library Capital Improvement Fund

Special thanks to the volunteers who made these programs happen, and to the following businesses and organizations who supported the Bigelow Library this year:

- All One Credit Union
- Avidia Bank
- Clinton Cultural Council (member of Massachusetts Cultural Council)
- Clinton Offset Printers, Inc. (in-kind donation)
- Clinton Savings Bank
- The Fountain Confections (vendor)
- Lighthouse Marble & Granite
- McHugh Family Disposal
- Philbin & O'Neil, LLC
- Regonini-Zoll Memorials
- Whitney Brothers Oil Corp.

Finances

We began this fiscal year with a $5k donation to the library, and we ended the year with a $5k donation to The Bigelow Free Public Library Capital Improvement Fund.

Category	**Revenue**	**Expense**	**Net**
Starting Balance	$12,645.00		$12,645.00
Membership	$1,015.00		$1,015.00
Donations	$2,546.00		$2,546.00
Events	$2,647.00	$1,635.00 *	$1,012.00
Ongoing Book Sale	$233.00		$233.00
Library Support		$10,507.00	$10,507.00
Gardening		$653.00	-$653.00
Tax Filing Fees		$50.00	-$50.00
Subscriptions		$110.00	-$110.00
Office Supplies		$51.00	-$51.00
Totals	**$19,086.00**	**$13,006.00**	**$6,080.00**

* We are waiting for a grant reimbursement of $1000 toward the mini golf event expense.